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Agenda items 20 (a), 111 and 116

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Human rights questions

Letter dated 7 June 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a communiqué issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia entitled, "Extrajudicial killings, torture, detentions and cases of disappearance being perpetrated by the Eritrean regime against Ethiopian civilians residing in Eritrea".

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 20 (a), 111 and 116.

(*Signed*) Fesseha A. **Tessema**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 7 June 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Extrajudicial killings, torture, detentions and cases of disappearance being perpetrated by the Eritrean regime against Ethiopian civilians residing in Eritrea

The extreme form of human rights violations suffered by Ethiopians over the last two years in the hands of the Eritrean Government has so far never been given sufficient attention by the international community. This despite the fact that nearly everyone knows that these violations have taken place and that Eritrea has continued to refuse to abide by principles of humanitarian law. That Eritrea still refuses to give the International Committee of the Red Cross access to Ethiopian prisoners of war is widely known, and is also widely ignored. This is a source of deep disappointment for the Ethiopian Government and for the Ethiopian people.

In the meantime, the human rights situation faced by Ethiopian nationals in Eritrea is worsening, and the latest information on the matter makes it clear that the lives of thousands of Ethiopians in Eritrea are in immediate danger. According to reliable information reaching us directly from Eritrea, the defeat on the battleground has only encouraged the Eritrean regime and its followers to intensify their crimes against Ethiopians who have the misfortune of living in Eritrea. The following represent only the most recent examples of cruelty witnessed in Eritrea:

- Seventy-nine Ethiopians residing in Asmara, Keren, AdiGuadad, AdiNefas and Durfo have been killed in a barbaric fashion;
- Abductions from homes and places of work have become common for Ethiopians:
  - 1,758 from Mendefera;
  - 3,000 from Mitsiwa (Massawa);
  - 1,394 from Dekemehari;
  - 1,337 from Keren;
- More than 5,000 Ethiopians have been arbitrarily detained in detention camps around Asmara called "Sheketi" and "Maihabar". Thousands have been moved to neighbourhood (Kebele) detention centres and temporarily converted cinema halls;
- Torture is the daily experience of Ethiopians in detention camps and elsewhere:
  - An Ethiopian named Teklu Kebede was severely beaten on 13 May 2000 and his family, including his four children, were arrested;
  - On 16 May 2000 an Ethiopian butcher was severely beaten with three colleagues on the road to Mitsiwa. His shop and car were destroyed by government-instigated mobs;

- On 16 May 2000 more than 100 Ethiopian daily labourers working in an organization called ASBECO were beaten and forced to walk barefoot. Their whereabouts are still unknown;
- Ethiopians residing in Asmara localities such as Gejeret, Maichuhet, Akria and Idaga Arbi were, on 17 May 2000, beaten severely. Some have lost their sight.

Such conduct instigated and carried out by the regime and its supporters cannot go unchecked and unpunished.

We appeal to all Governments as well as international organizations to assist these Ethiopians, who are at risk and who are at the mercy of a defeated and desperate Government that cares little for principles of humanitarian law.